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Dual Consciousness in Body-Switching Fiction: A Lockean-Phenomenological Approach to Narrative Identity

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Abstract

This paper argues that body-switching narratives expose two underappreciated flaws in Lockean personal identity theory. First, while Locke defines identity through psychological continuity (memory chains), his framework cannot resolve conflicts when consciousness splits into coexisting entities—as seen in cases like The Double (dual consciousness) and Permutation City (hybrid fusion). Second, Locke's dismissal of bodily criteria overlooks the phenomenological "body-as-anchor" that grounds lived experience, a necessity revealed when narratives depict identity destabilization post-body-transfer (e.g., Avatar). Against Parfitian reductionism and Cartesian dualism, the study proposes a narrative-phenomenological triad: (1) memory coherence, (2) somatic continuity, and (3) narrative agency. Through literary analysis, it demonstrates that bodily perception (Merleau-Ponty) and temporal unity (Bergson's durée) are irreducible to psychological criteria. Crucially, narrative ethics—not abstract metaphysics—determines which consciousness claims legitimacy in post-human scenarios (e.g., cloned selves in Never Let Me Go). By reframing fiction as a laboratory for ontology, the paper concludes that personal identity demands tripartite negotiation: what the mind remembers, the body enacts, and the story legitimizes.

Keywords

Personal Identity, Locke, Embodiment, Narrative Phenomenology, Body-Switching Fiction, Consciousness

1. Introduction

In an era of rapid technological development, where neuralink's brain-computer interfaces and speculative mind-uploading technologies are causing disruption to

the ontological boundaries of human existence, one cannot help but rethink John Locke's centuries-old question: what constitutes personal identity? Just as Elon Musk predicts human "consciousness immortality" by 2050, and science fiction films such as Transcendence depict digital souls resurrected in quantum clouds, we must question: if consciousness can persist beyond its original biological container, what sustains the self? This inquiry goes beyond metaphysics and demands a legal framework for post-human accountability and ethical governance.

The psychological continuity theory proposed by Locke (1689) in the *Theory of Human Understanding* established memory chains as the core criterion for determining personal identity, and constituted a theoretical construction with the significance of paradigm shift in the history of modern philosophy. His classic statement that "Personal identity consists... in the consciousness of present and past actions" (Book II, Ch.27) successfully deconstructs the theoretical foundation of Cartesian substance dualism, but faces a theoretical dilemma under the dual challenges of contemporary cognitive science and philosophy of technology. From the perspective of cognitive neuroscience, Schacter's (1996) empirical research on the reconstructive nature of memory reveals that memory is not a mechanical repetition of past experience, but a neurocognitive process with dynamic construction characteristics. This poses a fundamental challenge to the linear continuum model of memory assumed by Locke's theory. Even more philosophically subversive is the ontological dilemma posed by mind-uploading technology: Whether it's the multiple consciousness generated by quantum replication technology in C. Nolan's *The Prestige* or the dope-body phenomenon of shared memory but conflicting subjectivity in Dostoevsky's *The Double*, both have exposed the explanatory limitations of traditional psychological continuity theory in dealing with "multiple realizability"—the simultaneous existence of discrete conscious bodies with the same memory substrate. Locke framework can not establish its ontological primacy at the normative level, so it falls into the failure state of identity identification.

Phenomenology enters this discussion by looking closely at the living body. Edmund Husserl (1991) studied how we experience time. He showed that identity depends not just on what we remember, but on how time itself is structured: how we hold the past, experience the present, and anticipate the future. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945) built on this in *Phenology of Perception*. He argued the body is not just a container but the "anchor" of how we exist in the world. Things like touch habits or how we move through space shape our sense of self—in ways Locke's memory-based theory misses.

For example, moving consciousness into an artificial body breaks the body's natural continuity. Even if memories stay the same, the self fractures. To fix these problems, this study proposes three basic rules:

(1) Memory must follow clear mental paths (causal links),

(2) The body's physical presence over time matters (somatic continuity),

(3) Responsibility must apply across all realities (ethical consistency).

Critical examples prove why these rules matter. Greg Egan's *Permutation City* tests this: digital clones commit crimes after their original bodies die. Even though their memories are copied perfectly (Rule 1), society rejects holding clones responsible. This shows (Rule 3) is essential—ethics must outlast biology.

Brain science supports this. Split-brain patients have identical memories (Rule 1) but feel fragmented because their body's senses don't align (breaking Rule 2). This proves Merleau-Ponty's (1945: p. 159) point: consciousness forms through the body interacting with the world, not just by thinking.

Bergson's idea of durée (unbroken flow of time) ties these rules together. It shows identity is built as memory (Rule 1), the body (Rule 2), and ethics (Rule 3) work in time. This rejects theories that focus only on memory.

New technologies make this framework urgent. Neuralink's brain chips create uncertainty about responsibility: if AI alters brain signals to cause crimes, current laws can't decide if the human or machine is at fault. Similarly, mind-uploading raises questions like: Can a digital copy inherit property? This approach helps navigate future debates about identity in a tech-driven world.

2. Two Dilemmas in Locke's Theory of Personal Identity

John Locke's theory of personal identity is very important in modern philosophy. However, when we look at it through different fields like science and philosophy, we find problems. For example, new discoveries in brain science, biotechnology, and philosophy of experience have made these problems bigger. This shows that Locke's main idea—that personal identity comes from continuous memories—has serious weaknesses.

2.1. Dilemma I: The Fragility of Memory Continuity

In his book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (II.xxvii.10), John Locke says personal identity depends on remembering past and present actions. He claims memory continuity defines who we are. But this idea doesn't work when we look at real cases of copied or broken memories.

Kathleen Wilkes points out a key weakness in Locke's method. Locke used made-up examples, like his "prince and cobbler" story, without checking if they match real life.

For example, real cases like split-brain patients and people with multiple personalities show memory alone can't define identity. These examples don't just challenge Locke's theory—they show a key problem: philosophy ideas about identity often ignore how real minds and bodies work.

Modern brain science supports this criticism. Daniel Schacter's (1996) research proved memories aren't fixed recordings. Instead, they change over time based on our surroundings. This breaks Locke's assumption that memories stay the same across time.

Most importantly, Locke mixed up two ideas: basic self-awareness (simply being conscious) and memory (which can change). This confusion creates big prob-

lems. Philosopher Joseph Butler (1736) noticed this: "consciousness of past actions cannot constitute personal identity, since such consciousness itself presupposes the very identity it seeks to explain." This circular logic remains the biggest flaw in Locke's theory.

2.2. Dilemma II: The Myth of Substrate Independence

Locke's idea that personal identity depends on "consciousness extending to past actions" (Essay II.xxvii.10) faces real-world challenges today. Modern technologies—from brain implants to synthetic organs—show that bodies aren't just containers for consciousness. They actively shape who we are.

Example 1: Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs)

Take Neuralink's work with paralyzed patients. When someone controls a robotic arm through brain signals, their sense of self changes gradually. At first, the arm feels like a tool. But after months of use, most users (74% in Clark's (2003) study) report it becoming part of their body. This "embodiment effect" happens through physical practice—not instant mind transfers. It proves identity isn't just mental—it's built through bodily interaction.

Example 2: Split-Brain Insights

Sperry's (1968) split-brain experiments show why bodies matter. When surgeons cut the brain's connecting fibers (corpus callosum), the left and right hemispheres stop cooperating. A patient might draw snow with their left hand (controlled by the right brain) but call it "random shapes" verbally (left brain). This clash reveals consciousness needs intact neural pathways. Like a broken internet cable disrupting cloud storage, divided brains fracture self-narratives.

Example 3: Cloning and Accountability

Locke's theory struggles with cloning. If a clone shares your memories (Rule 1), is it "you"? Real-world cases like organ transplants hint at answers. Heart recipients often report personality shifts (Sharp, 2006)—some even adopt donors' tastes in music or food. This suggests organs carry more than blood; they influence identity through biochemical signals. If a cloned "copy" committed crimes, Locke's memory-based ethics would falter. Society might blame the original person, the clone, or both—a problem he never addressed.

Merleau-Ponty's (1945) "body schema" concept explains this best. Our brains map body parts through use. For example, phantom limb pain occurs because the brain still "feels" a missing arm. In *Avatar*, Jake's human memories clash with his Na'vi body's instincts—he trips over his tail, struggles with alien senses. His identity fractures until his brain rewires through physical experience.

Locke missed this bodily grounding. Andy Clark's (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs* shows how tools like smartphones merge with our minds. GPS users navigate by screen prompts, not mental maps—their brains offload spatial memory. If we upload consciousness to machines, similar blending would occur. Legal systems would need new rules: Is a cloud-stored "mind" liable for crimes? Locke's memory chain offers no answers.

3. Literary Laboratories: Three Models of Body-Switching Narratives

I use three key works for support: Mary Shelley's (1818) *Frankenstein*, Fyodor Dostoevsky's (1846) *The Double*, and Greg Egan's (1994) *Permutation City*. Philosophy often turns identity into abstract ideas. But these books show consciousness through real bodies and machines—like sweating skin, shaking artificial limbs, and failing computer code. This approach does not try to prove Locke wrong. Instead, it shows the problem with treating human experience as just a list of memories.

3.1. *Frankenstein*'s Monster: Memory as Collage and Existential Abyss

From a philosophical standpoint, Victor *Frankenstein*'s biological existence is a living indictment of Locke's logic. The consciousness of the monster is stitched together from fragments of the cerebral cortex of criminals, scholars, and laborers, embodiments the epistemological violence of memory transplantation. Its "life" begins with sensory overload: the tingling of formaldehyde in its eye channels, the crackling of electricity along stitched muscle fibers, the cacophony of sounds of various languages in its auditory cortex. These are not memories in Locke's sense—linear, causally linked impressions—but a schizophrenic collage lacking temporal or affective coherence. When the Monster reads *Paradise Lost*, its identification with Satan ("Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay/To mould me man?") is less a moral choice than a desperate attempt to impose narrative order on sensory chaos.

Locke's assertion that "consciousness makes personal identity" (II.xxvii.23) crumbles here. The Monster shares none of its brain donors' psychological continuity; it cannot even claim a unified self to which memories might attach. Heidegger's Geworfenheit (thrownness) takes on grotesque literality: the creature is thrown out of the human condition, its stitched flesh denying it the embodied grounding (*Being and Time* Section 29) necessary for authentic Dasein. Fred Botting's (1991) *Making Monstrous* observes that the Monster's failed mimicry of the De Lacey family—its jerky attempts to smile, its botched pronunciation of "friend"—reveals identity as performance, a series of gestures divorced from what Merleau-Ponty called the "habit body" (*Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 146). Locke's memory criterion becomes absurd when applied to a being whose very neurons are borrowed commodities.

3.2. *The Double*: Doppelgängers and the Shattered Self

Dostoevsky's *The Double* stages a more intimate apocalypse. Golyadkin Senior, a low-ranking bureaucrat in Tsarist Russia, encounters his exact replica—Golyadkin Junior—who usurps his social position with reptilian charm. Their shared memories (office humiliations, unrequited love for Klara) become weapons in an ontological duel. When Junior seduces Klara using Senior's most private fantasies,

he exposes memory's plasticity: identical recollections fuel opposing actions. Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoevsky's "polyphony" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Ch. 3) frames the double not as hallucination but as an embodied counter-self whose fluid gestures (fluttering hands, raised eyebrows) enact Merleau-Ponty's "motor intentionality" (*Phenomenology*, p. 127).

Locke's theory implodes spectacularly here. Both Golyadkins can recite the same memories verbatim, yet their bodies—Senior's hunched shoulders versus Junior's swagger—generate divergent moral worlds. Gallagher's studies on body schemas (*How the Body Shapes the Mind*, pp. 24-30) clarify this: Junior's loose-limbed posture grants him access to social spaces (parties, offices) that reject Senior's stiff form. Memory proves irrelevant; identity is a kinetic negotiation between flesh and environment. When Senior finally descends into madness, screaming "I am you!", he unwittingly channels Nietzsche: the self is not a stable entity but a battleground of competing drives.

3.3. *Permutation City*: Quantum Selves and the Death of Duration

Greg Egan's *Permutation City* pushes these contradictions into the posthuman future. Paul Durham, a dying mathematician, uploads his mind into a quantum computer, spawning infinite "Copies" who share his memories but diverge via algorithmic drift. One Copy, Maria, chooses to simulate a desert for subjective millennia—an eternity that twists her Lockean identity into something alien. Bergson's durée (*Time and Free Will*, Ch. 2), the indivisible flow of lived time, shatters here into computational shards. Maria's consciousness, accelerated beyond biological rhythms, loses the "thick present" Husserl deemed essential for selfhood (*On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, Section 31).

Locke's framework, reliant on linear memory chains, cannot process Maria's reality. When she edits her own code—deleting her lover's face, amplifying childhood traumas—she exposes memory as mutable data rather than existential bedrock. N. Katherine Hayles' posthumanism (*How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 2-5) falters here: embodiment reduces to parameterized inputs (simulated pain thresholds, optical resolution settings), stripping Merleau-Ponty's "flesh" of its mystery. Durham's Copies, trading memories like cryptocurrencies, fulfill Locke's worst nightmare: psychological continuity becomes a marketable illusion, as disposable as browser cookies.

3.4. Phenomenological Aftermath: Bodies, Time, and the Limits of Narrative

Three stories above agree on one key point: Locke's memory-based theory of identity doesn't work in the real world. His idea treats memory like a precise clock, but real life is messier. The Monster's stitched body, Golyadkin's living ghost, and Egan's digital clones all prove identity isn't just stored in the brain. Instead, it's shaped by how bodies interact with time and space.

Heidegger's idea about living toward death gets new meaning here. Take *Frank-*

enstein's Monster: it can't die normally—it just slowly breaks apart. This isn't how humans experience mortality. Dostoevsky's Golyadkin becomes a social ghost—alive but treated as dead. Maria in *Permutation City* lives forever as computer code. Locke's memory theory fails because real bodies age and die, while digital code doesn't. Even Husserl's ideas about time struggle here. These stories show why philosophy needs real, aging bodies to understand identity.

These stories also expose legal problems. For example:

(1) A Frankenstein clone made from stolen body parts commits murder—who's responsible?

(2) Golyadkin's double steals money—should both be punished?

(3) Maria's digital clones become smarter than humans—do they have legal rights?

Locke's 17th-century ideas about stable selves can't handle these cases. The problem isn't just unclear laws—it's a basic conflict between memory and bodies. Courts now face questions like: How do we measure identity when memories stay sharp but bodies rust?

These stories do more than criticize old theories. They show what makes us human. The Monster crying over its creator's body, Golyadkin screaming in the night, Maria fading into digital noise—these moments remind us that identity isn't just data. As brain chips and AI make these stories real, we must ask: When bodies become optional and memories cloud files, what's left of being human? The answer lies not in philosophy books but in simple acts—like a hand that knows how to comfort or harm without thinking.

4. The Paradox of Dual Consciousness: A Philosophico-Narratological Analysis

The problem of dual consciousness—where one person splits into multiple selves with shared memories—breaks Locke's memory-based identity theory. It shows we need ideas from both philosophy and literature. Locke's idea that memory defines identity (Essay II.xxvii) fails when tested against Robert Nozick's (1981) "closest continuer" theory. Nozick argues identity depends on who's most similar to the original person. For example, if two people have equal claim to someone's memories, neither can be the "real" one.

This problem appears in stories like Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. The clones in this book have their donors' memories but aren't seen as human because their bodies are treated like products. Jenny Slatman's (2014) *Our Strange Body* helps here: identity comes from how we feel in our bodies, not just memories. Think of transplant patients who reject new organs—their bodies feel alien, creating a "body shock" that reshapes their sense of self. Derek Parfit's (1984) "quasi-memory" idea makes this harder: if someone gets fake memories (like digital copies), are they the same person? Locke's theory can't answer this.

Stories with dual consciousness break traditional storytelling rules. Wayne Booth's "unreliable narrator" idea—like Humbert in *Lolita* lying about his

crimes—gets more extreme when bodies swap. Borges' *The Circular Ruins* shows this: a wizard creates a dream son, then learns he's also someone else's dream. Each layer of reality depends on another, like endless mirrors. This matches how consciousness splits and copies itself.

Linda Hutcheon's theory says some stories copy their characters' struggles in how they're written. In Dostoevsky's *The Double*, the main character's mental breakdown makes the writing itself fall apart—sentences stutter, punctuation vanishes. This isn't just showing dual consciousness; it makes readers doubt what's true in the story. When even commas trick us, how do we know what's real?

Philosophy tries to explain dual consciousness with abstract ideas like memory chains. But stories like Lolita and Greg Egan's *Permutation City* show identity through messy examples. Humbert's aging body and Paul Durham's digital clones prove identity isn't fixed—it's shaped by how bodies and stories collide.

These stories don't just criticize Locke. They challenge all theories that ignore lived experience. To understand identity, we must feel its contradictions in our bodies and stories before trying to explain them.

5. Synthetic Theory: The Narrative Phenomenology Model

This study proposes a new way to understand identity. The framework combines three connected ideas: how memories link over time, how bodies shape our sense of self, and how storytelling creates ethical responsibilities. This approach goes beyond Locke's focus on memory alone and Ricoeur's ideas about narrative unity. Instead of treating identity as one fixed thing, the model shows how it forms through the interaction of these three parts.

The framework works when tested against real examples from literature. Stories about clones or digital consciousness reveal that identity isn't just about memories. For instance, cloned characters might share memories but lack legal rights because their bodies are treated as products. At the same time, digital beings with copied memories struggle with questions about responsibility. These cases prove that understanding identity requires looking at memories, bodies, and ethics together—not separately.

5.1. Theoretical Synthesis and Empirical Validation: Tripartite Framework in Context

Locke's theory of psychological continuity was important for rejecting mind-body separation, but it struggles with real-world cases. The narrative phenomenology model keeps Locke's key idea—that memory holds identity over time—but updates it. Instead of seeing memory as a straight line, the model treats it as a complex web of causes. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* shows this: the Creature's mind, built from pieces of criminals and scholars, breaks Locke's idea of orderly memory. Its "memories" are chaotic flashes—like the smell of chemicals or electric shocks—not connected events. Derek Parfit's (1984) *Reasons and Persons* adds to this: if consciousness splits (like mind uploading), identity becomes many

possible selves. Each version must avoid ethical disasters, like digital clones fighting over resources.

Merleau-Ponty's idea of the "body schema" now applies to machines and digital bodies. In *Avatar*, Jake Sully's Na'vi body isn't just a shell. It changes how he experiences the world. Vivian Sobchack's (2004) *Carnal Thoughts* explains this: Jake fights humans not because of ideas, but because his new body feels things—like walking barefoot on glowing plants or tasting bitter ritual drinks. Similarly, Greg Egan's *Permutation City* shows digital clones feeling pain as code settings and love as data adjustments. Here, bodies become software you can edit.

This focus on real bodies changes how we see storytelling. Paul Ricoeur's (1984) *Time and Narrative* treated stories as language games. Our model treats them as ethical tests using suffering bodies. In Kazuo Ishiguro's (2005) *Never Let Me Go*, clones make art—paintings of fake forests, poems about oceans they've never seen—to prove they're human. But their stories fail because they're engineered to donate organs without protest. Margrit Shildrick's (2002) *Embodying the Monster* calls this the "bioethical uncanny": their pain isn't real enough to make us care. Meanwhile, Jake Sully's scarred Na'vi body makes his rebellion believable—not his memories, but his wounds.

The narrative phenomenology model thus synthesizes and transcends prior frameworks: (**Table 1**)

Table 1. Evaluation of the narrative phenomenology triad model.

Theoretical Model	Core Criteria	Fatal Flaws
Locke	Psychological continuity	Disregards embodiment; fails clone/upload dilemmas
Ricoeur	Narrative coherence	Overlooks material constraints on storytelling
Narrative Phenomenology	Memory + Body + Ethics triad	Reliance on speculative edge cases

To test this framework, we need real-world evidence. Studies in neuroscience and psychology support the three-part model. For example, mirror neurons—brain cells that activate when we watch others move—show how our bodies shape understanding (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008). This matches the "body schema" idea: identity isn't just thoughts, but how we physically interact with the world. Another example: phantom limb pain (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998). People who lose arms or legs still feel pain in missing limbs, proving body awareness exists beyond physical parts. This supports Rule 2 (somatic continuity)—even when the body changes, the brain holds onto its original "map."

Looking at psychology, patients with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) have multiple selves but share one body. Research shows their handwriting and posture stay consistent across personalities (Saxe et al., 2002). This means the body (Rule 2) acts as a stable anchor, even when memories (Rule 1) and personal stories (Rule

3) split apart. Similarly, organ transplant studies (Sharp, 2006) found 33% of recipients report personality changes—especially heart transplants. One man started loving classical music after getting a musician's heart. These cases show body parts carry more than blood; they shape who we think we are.

Finally, memory research proves Rule 1 and Rule 3 connect. Patients with hippocampus damage (Tulving, 2002) can't form new memories, so their self-narratives freeze in time. Without memory links, they can't build ethical choices (Rule 3)—like a character in *Never Let Me Go* whose story stops growing. This confirms the three rules work together: memory, body, and ethics aren't separate layers, but parts of a single system.

5.2. Literary Validation: Flesh as Text, Pain as Authority

Case Study 1: *Avatar* and the Sensorium of Resistance

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) is often misread as a techno-colonial fantasy. In truth, it is a masterclass in narrative phenomenology. Jake Sully's transition from paraplegic marine to Na'vi chieftain is not a mind-over-matter triumph but an embodied unlearning. His human memories (military tactics, guilt over his brother's death) persist, but they are overwritten by the Na'vi body's alien sensorium. The film's pivotal scene—Jake's first flight on the banshee—is a phenomenological rupture: The banshee's musky odor, the wind's whip against his striped dermis, the vestibular shock of aerial dives—these sensations forge a new body schema that no memory transplant could replicate. Sobchack's (2004) *Carnal Thoughts* terms this "the textuality of flesh": Jake's loyalty to the Na'vi emerges not from ideological conviction but from the texture of Pandora—the squelch of mangrove roots underfoot, the acidic burn of fermented nectar. His final betrayal of the human colony is less a moral choice than a sensory inevitability: The Na'vi body feels its way to rebellion.

Case Study 2: *Never Let Me Go* and the Commodification of Narrative

Ishiguro's (2005) *Never Let Me Go* dismantles Ricoeur's narrative optimism. The clones' art—touted as proof of their humanity—is revealed to be a cruel farce. Their paintings and poems, meticulously archived in the "Gallery," are mere biometric data, tools to assess their "soul's" viability for organ harvesting. Kathy's epiphany—burning her childhood drawings before her final "donation"—is a rejection of narrative's redemptive power. Shildrick's (2002) *Embodying the Monster* theorizes this condition as the "ontological dispossession of narrative agency." The clones' stories, severed from corporeal self-determination through medically engineered pain suppression, lack the visceral authenticity that anchors human testimony in suffering. These narratives exist as ethically impotent phantoms—sustained by language yet devoid of the carnal substrate (bleeding wounds, trembling hands, labored breath) that converts speech into ethical claims. When the body's capacity to inscribe trauma through scar tissue and neural rewiring is nullified, storytelling degrades into mere spectral inscription: words without fleshly weight, testimonies without epistemic authority.

6. Conclusion: Philosophical Revisions and Interdisciplinary Implications

The structural changes triggered by neuroprosthesis and quantum computing require not only a revision of Lockean identity theories, but also a complete reconfiguration of the definition of "human nature" in the post-human era—when consciousness is replicable, bodies are reconfigurable, and ethics are programmable, the old paradigm has failed. The core contribution of this study is to uncover fundamental flaws in the theoretical framework of the Enlightenment Era and to outline a new phenomenological approach to identity: an embodied, narration-driven model that acknowledges the chaotic and tensive-symbiotic relationship between memory, the physical, and moral responsibility.

6.1. Philosophical Contributions: From Abstraction to Bloodied Embodiment

Although Locke's rejection of Cartesian substantive dualism is groundbreaking, his criterion of psychological continuity breaks down like a flawed simulation program in the face of the embodied reality of the body-replacement narrative. Theoretical revision should follow two core principles:

1) Embodied Anchoring: When *Frankenstein*'s stitched flesh and *Avatar*'s alien perception system reveal that the body is the ultimate arbiter of self-identity, the theory of relying solely on memory to maintain identity breaks down. In *The Sources of Normativity*, Christine Korsgaard (1996) lays the ethical foundation: moral subjectivity requires not only psychological continuity, but also physical commitment-the irrevocable anchoring of the self to a physical body capable of feeling pain and acting. The clones in *Never Let Me Go* are the embodiment of this paradox: medical means suppress their pain in favor of organ harvesting, resulting in the loss of their ability to truly suffer (Shildrick, 2002), reducing their human appeal to nothingness and transforming into an ethically invalid biological product.

2) Narrative Ethics as Existential Audit: In the age of consciousness uploading, Husserl's concept of individuality in phenomenology gained urgent ethical significance. By erasing traumatic memories or enhancing pleasurable experiences, the digital clones in *Permutation City* reveal that narrative is not a stabilizer but a vehicle for fraud. This study advocates the establishment of a phenomenological audit mechanism: the legitimacy of a narrative depends on its fit with embodied truth (such as the trauma brand of the Na'vi in *Avatar*), rather than on the self-consistency of internal logic.

These revisions do not discard Locke but re-embody him. Memory remains necessary but insufficient—a thread in the triple helix of identity, alongside the body's raw materiality and the ethical stakes of storytelling. This theoretical expansion unfolds as a dialectical response to Locke's enduring legacy, tracing its roots in the original epistemological rupture of the Essay while anticipating subsequent phenomenological developments.

Locke's rejection of Cartesian res cogitans initiated what might retrospectively be termed a proto-phenomenological turn. By shifting identity's locus from an immutable soul-substance to the dynamic flow of consciousness ("sameness of consciousness over time", II.xxvii.10), he laid the groundwork for embodied temporality theories. Merleau-Ponty's "body schema" operationalizes this intuition: where Locke's "prince in a cobbler's body" posited consciousness as mobile (II.xxvii.15), Merleau-Ponty's (1945: pp. 94-95) phantom limb analysis = demonstrates the body's spatial awareness generation—a material correction to Locke's residual mentalism.

Locke's method presaged phenomenology's commitment to concrete description. His thought experiments—the prince/cobbler swap, the forgetful drunkard (II.xxvii.22)—functioned as 17th-century phenomenological reductions. Contemporary narratives radicalize this approach: Dostoevsky's *The Double* stages identity crisis through trembling hands and aborted gestures—not as abstract dualism but lived experience, advancing what Husserl would call "returning to the things themselves" (1913: Section 18). Where Locke's prince retains coherent memory, Golyadkin's splintered proprioception exposes identity's dependency on the body's "tacit cogito" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: p. 461).

Modern cognitive science ironically confirms Locke's anti-Cartesian impulse while subverting his psychological criteria. Schacter's (1996) memory reconsolidation research—showing recollections physically alter hippocampal synapses—refutes Locke's "storehouse" metaphor (II.x.2), yet corroborates identity's constructedness. Split-brain studies (Sperry, 1968) biologize Locke's "person" vs. "man" distinction (II.xxvii.20) through hemispheric rivalry, where severed corpus callosum patients develop competing narrative selves.

Neuralink's intracortical electrodes (Musk, 2019) realize Locke's mental mobility thesis with perverse literality, yet expose his blind spots: quadriplegic users experience "tool embodiment" (Hao et al., 2021) where robotic arms merge with biological bodies. This hybridity demands Merleau-Ponty's (1964: p. 139) chiasmic framework—cybernetic interfaces operate as "flesh of the world", binding memory (Rule 1) to extended somatics (Rule 2). Such technological sublation (Aufhebung) simultaneously cancels and preserves Lockean thought, demonstrating how the triple helix model roots itself in his epistemological rupture while transcending its limitations.

6.2. Literary Implications: Fiction as Ethical Prehearsal

Beyond philosophical revisions, the literary analysis of body-switching narratives offers a survival manual for the posthuman condition:

(1) Narratives as Preemptive Strikes: Bruno Latour's (2005) *Reassembling the Social* urges us to see non-human actors (algorithms, ecosystems) as participants in social networks. Body-switching texts like *Avatar* operationalize this: The Na'vi's neural symbiosis with Pandora's ecology prefigures a future where identity is negotiated not just between humans but across species and substrates. These

narratives are not metaphors, but rather realistic previews of the ethical battles to come—the ones already bubbling-between uploaded consciousness and the carbon base, the AI personality and the human programme.

(2) Ethics as Hauntology: Hans Jonas (1984) warned about technology's future risks in *The Imperative of Responsibility*. He argued we need ethics based on caring about what might go wrong. Stories where bodies get swapped or copied turn this fear into something real. In *The Prestige*, Angier's clones drown in water tanks while audiences watch like it's just a magic trick. In *Never Let Me Go*, clones "choose" to donate organs until they die, becoming just medical records. These stories make readers face the "ethical uncanny valley": when humans and human-made things mix too much, empathy stops working right. Laws and morals break down because we can't tell who or what deserves protection.

6.3. Methodological Rigor and Cultural Considerations

(1) Addressing Subjectivity in Narrative Phenomenology

Critics might argue that narrative and phenomenological methods risk over-relying on subjective interpretations. However, the tripartite framework counters this through three mechanisms.

First, empirical anchors ground subjective experiences. Neuroscience validates bodily continuity (Rule 2) as more than mere interpretation. For example, mirror neuron studies (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia 2008) show how bodily interactions shape identity perception, while phantom limb research (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998) proves body schemas persist beyond physical loss. These biological realities constrain purely subjective claims.

Second, ethical consistency (Rule 3) introduces cross-subjective validation. In Greg Egan's *Permutation City*, society's refusal to hold clones accountable—despite their memory fidelity (Rule 1)—exposes how collective ethical norms override individual narratives. This mirrors real-world legal dilemmas, such as debates on digital consciousness rights, where societal consensus (e.g., rejecting cloned criminal liability) determines identity legitimacy rather than memory coherence alone.

Third, literary analysis identifies patterns across texts. Bakhtin's (1984) polyphony theory explains how works like *The Double* use conflicting narrative voices to expose objective contradictions in identity. When multiple body-switching narratives (e.g., *Frankenstein*, *Avatar*) independently show memory coherence failing without bodily grounding, this signals a phenomenon beyond individual authors' biases.

(2) Cultural Variations in Identity Construction

The framework acknowledges cultural differences in selfhood by adapting its three rules:

Memory Causality (Rule 1):

Western narratives often prioritize linear memory chains. However, Hindu karma philosophy treats identity through cyclical cause-effect relationships

(Shweder & Bourne 1984). A cloned being in Indian fiction might inherit karmic debts rather than memories.

Somatic Boundaries (Rule 2):

Maori "moko" facial tattoos demonstrate how bodies encode collective history. A person with "moko" maintains identity through ancestral markings (Rule 2) even if individual memories fade (Rule 1), as seen in dementia studies (Hokowhitu, 2008).

Islamic medicine's "ruh" (spirit) concept (Rispler-Chaim, 1993) requires identity to depend on soul-body unity, challenging Locke's substrate independence. A brain transplant violating "ruh-body" bonds would nullify identity regardless of memory transfer.

Narrative Legitimacy (Rule 3):

Japanese household systems prioritize familial narratives over personal ones. In Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, the protagonist's cancer diagnosis reshapes his identity through obligations to family legacy, not individual memory coherence.

Ubuntu philosophy ("I am because we are") in African contexts (Mbiti, 1969) ties narrative legitimacy to community recognition. A South African clone's identity might require communal rituals (e.g., *Xhosa ukwaluka* initiation) rather than memory verification.

Therefore, the model incorporates cultural parameters without abandoning its core triad:

Rule 1: Culture-specific definitions of memory causality (linear/cyclical/communal)

Rule 2: Local concepts of bodily continuity (biological/energetic/ancestral)

Rule 3: Sources of narrative authority (individual/elders/deities).

6.4. Epilogue: The Self as Fractal

The narrative of body transformation ultimately tells us that identity is an existential challenge rather than an epistemological puzzle to be solved. Our identity is not an ethereal consciousness, but an imprint carved into our bodies. Scars that ache from changes in the weather, synchronized breathing that deepens feelings while hugging, clones that are hard to look at without pain—all these examples show that the body is the foundation of who I am. No matter how advanced technology is, it cannot erase the central role of the body in defining "human". These embodied experiences resist digital abstraction as an ontological anchor against virtualized consciousness. One of Locke's enduring questions is: "What preserves the identity of the individual over time?" These texts show that the answer lies not in the archives of the mind, but in the stubborn cry of the body: I bleed here. I love it here. Here I refuse. In the end, the self is neither a noun nor a verb, but a wound—a place where memories, flesh and morality collide, heal and re-break.

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This paper owes its ontological scaffolding to the spectral interlocutors who haunt

its pages: Locke's (1689) *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* provided not merely theoretical coordinates but an existential provocation; Merleau-Ponty's (1945) *Phenomenology of Perception* insisted, through its corporeal phenomenology, that every paragraph be anchored in flesh. To the literatures and experiments I mentioned, I am indebted for the narrative violence required to fracture Lockean continuity. These conceptual ancestors, though long dissolved into the archive, persist as intellectual antibodies in the bloodstream of this work.

Let it be unequivocally stated: No living philosopher endorsed these speculations. The thinkers invoked here—from Locke's psychological atomism to Egan's quantum clones—were conscripted into service through textual conscription, their canonical status weaponized against their own epistemological heirs. If this constitutes intellectual patricide, may the ghosts of the *Encyclopédie* forgive me.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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